

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 161900 TOSEC 060029

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 9106 ACTION SECSTATE JUL 8

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9106

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJ: PROPOSED LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER ON ANTI-US
ALLEGATIONS

REFS: NEW DELHI 8934 AND NEW DELHI 8751

THE AMBASSADOR PROPOSES TO SEND THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO FOREIGN
MINISTER CHAVAN IF THE DEPARTMENT SEES NO OBJECTION. THE LETTER
ASKS THE GOI TO STOP ALLEGATIONS OF US INTERFERENCE IN INDIAN
INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY INDIAN LEADERS AND THE CENSORED INDIAN PRESS.
(THE ENCLOSURE TO THE LETTER WILL GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES, WHICH
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WE HAVE REPORTED IN OUR TELEGRAMS ON THE SITUATION IN INDIA.)

THE LETTER ALSO ASKS THE GOI TO CLARIFY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS NOT REFERRING TO THE UNITED STATES WHEN SHE TALKED ABOUT CRITICISM OF INDIA FOR CURBING DEMOCRACY BY COUNTRIES WHICH WERE GOING TOWARD CHINA AND WHICH HAD SUPPORTED YAHYA KHAN (NEW DELHI 8952). ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD PLAN TO SEND THE LETTER JULY 9 AND WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE BY OPENING OF BUSINESS JULY 9 NEW DELHI TIME.

1. QUOTE: DEAR MR. MINISTER: I WISH TO BRING TO YOUR URGENT ATTENTION ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. INTERFERENCE IN INDIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS MADE BY INDIAN LEADERS AND BY THE NOW-CENSORED INDIAN PRESS. THESE ARE SUMMARIZED IN THE ENCLOSURES TO THIS LETTER.

2. I FIND MOST DISTURBING THE ALLEGATIONS BY INDIAN LEADERS. THESE INCLUDE CHARGES BY UNION MINISTER UMASHANKAR DIKSHIT, CHIEF MINISTER VENGAL RAO, AND CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT D.K. BAROOAH. THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE ALL HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OR THE RULING PARTY, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN FURTHER IMPORTANCE TO THEIR VIEWS BY PERMITTING THEIR DISSEMINATION UNDER CENSORSHIP.

3. ELEMENTS OF THE PRESS, IN ADDITION TO REPORTING THE STATEMENTS BY THESE INDIAN LEADERS, HAVE ALSO PRINTED OTHER ALLEGATIONS. AT LEAST ONE OF THESE STORIES -- CONSISTING OF CHARGES MADE BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL, ROMESH VHANDRA -- WAS CARRIED BY YOUR WIRE SERVICES, WHICH ARE THEMSELVES SUBJECT TO PRE-CENSORSHIP.

4. IN SHORT, IT APPEARS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS STILL "FAIR GAME" FOR SUCH ALLEGATIONS FOLLOWING DECLARATION OF THE EMERGENCY AND IMPOSITION OF PRESS CENSORSHIP. WHILE MY GOVERNMENT HAS PUBLICLY REGRETTED THE EXPULSION OF AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST AND IS OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO CENSORSHIP, WE BELIEVE THAT IF CENSORSHIP IS TO BE IMPOSED, IT SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED IN AN EVEN-HANDED MANNER, AND THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT BE SINGLED OUT FOR SUCH UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS. INDEED, THE CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS PROMULGATED ON JUNE 26, 1975 SPECIFICALLY PROHIBIT PUBLICATION OF RUMORS AND CONJECTURES RELATING TO INDIAN INTERNAL SECURITY AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS. AS YOU ARE AWARE, WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR REPEATEDLY THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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ENGAGED IN ANY ACTIVITIES WITHIN INDIA AIMED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, AND IF YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS ANY INFORMATION TO THE CONTRARY, I HOPE YOU WILL BRING THIS PROMPTLY TO MY ATTENTION SO THAT IMMEDIATE ACTION CAN BE TAKEN.

5. ON A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT SUBJECT, I NOTE THAT ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS YOUR PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE YOUNG LAWYERS' CONGRESS JULY 4 THAT THE "COUNTRIES" WHICH HAD BEEN CRITICIZING

INDIA FOR CURBING DEMOCRACY WERE "THOSE WHICH WERE COMPETING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN GOING TOWARD CHINA" AND HAD SUPPORTED GENERAL YAHYA KHAN'S MILITARY RULE IN PAKISTAN AND HIS SUPPRESSION OF BANGLADESH. THE PRIME MINISTER REPORTEDLY ADDED, "THOSE COUNTRIES SHOULD LOOK TO THEMSELVES FIRST RATHER THAN SERMON US." AT LEAST ONE NEWSPAPER (THE PATRIOT) CONCLUDED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS REFERRING TO THE UNITED STATES. AS YOU KNOW, OTHER THAN PROTESTING THE EXPULSION OF AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS TERMED THE RECENT EVENTS IN INDIA AN INTERNAL AFFAIR AND HAS DECLINED ANY COMMENT ON THEM. I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOUR GOVERNMENT COULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS NOT REFERRING TO THE UNITED STATES.

END QUOTE.

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